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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES AIR FORCE  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

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AUTH CS, USAF

*Eda*  
17 October 1951

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[Redacted]  
Executive Secretary  
Board of National Estimates  
Central Intelligence Agency  
Washington 25, D. C.

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Dear [Redacted]

Reference is made to your memorandum of 15 October 1951,  
Subject: Chinese Communist Air Order of Battle.

The aircraft strength presently available to the Chinese Communist Air Force, conceivably could be doubled by the end of 1952, when viewed in the light of the increase from 200 to 1330 aircraft during the past twelve months. However, any estimate of future strength based on either past and current emergency accumulation, or on future requirements would be highly speculative inasmuch as Communist China will continue to be wholly dependent on the Soviet Union for supply and support of her air force. Such assistance will in turn continue to be determined by the intentions and desires of the Soviet Union, not only with respect to the Korean operation, but in other areas as well.

The recent and continuing extensive buildup of aircraft ostensibly operating as units of the CCAF has been to meet the specific requirements of the Korean operation. At such time as sufficient aircraft are furnished the CCAF from Soviet production lines to permit the CCAF to operate with adequate reserves, the extent of augmentation can be expected to be reduced. Assuming that certain units now operating with the CCAF are "volunteer" units, it is reasonable to anticipate their withdrawal at the cessation of hostilities in Korea with a resultant lowering of total aircraft available to the CCAF.

Continuing substantial evidence establishes that the Soviets are making available additional aircraft and technical personnel to the Chinese Communists, and it is possible that SAF "volunteer" personnel are operating aircraft accredited to the Chinese Communists. A limiting factor on further increase in the number of aircraft available to the Chinese Communist would be the capability or willingness of the Soviet Union to provide these aircraft and the increased logistical support necessary for their operation and maintenance.

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USAF review(s) completed.

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Soviet augmentation of the CCAF, in a mounting scale of strength could consist of: (a) provision of additional aircraft and advisory personnel with possibly some "volunteer" pilots; (b) the provision of equipped "volunteer" air units; (c) the coordinated use of Soviet Air Force units; and (d) the full participation of as much of the Soviet Air Force, particularly the Far East Air Force, as the Soviets elect to commit.

Sincerely,

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Colonel, USAF  
Executive, Estimates Division  
Directorate of Intelligence

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